

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4601
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 14683

BONN FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, UNHCR
SUBJECT: TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNHCR EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE

REF: STATE 247699

1. AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE CANADIAN CHARGE, AN INFORMAL MEETING OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON SEPTEMBER 29 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS ISSUES LIKELY TO COME UP AT THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION. REPRESENTED WERE AUSTRIA, AUSTRALIA, BLGIUM, CANADA, DENMARK FRANCE, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, ITALY, THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THE U.S. AND THE U.K. WARREN AND BRENNAN REPRESENTED THE U.S. THE GROUP AGREED THAT AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS PRIOR TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WAS USEFUL NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, BUT CONCLUDED THAT THE FORMATION OF A WESTERN GROUP OR COMMITTEE OF PRINCIPAL DONORS WAS UNWISE.

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2. THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AMBASSADOR JOHANN CAPPELEN OF NORWAY REPORTED THAT CANADA'S AMBASSADOR, HARRY JAY WOULD BE ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION, MINISTER COUNSELOR ADAMU ALHAJI MOHAMMED OF NIGERIA VICE CHAIRMAN AND HECTOR GRIFFIN OF VENEZUELA AS RAPPORTEUR. AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE

BY THE EXCOMM CHAIRMAN TO SECURE THE NOMINATION OF AN ASIAN OR A LATIN AMERICAN FOR ONE OF THE HIGH OFFICES, BUT THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WAS SUCH THAT NO LOGICAL CANDIDATES EXISTED AT THIS TIME FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, INCLUDING THE DESIRABILITY OF RETAINING PROPER GEOGRAPHICAL ROTATION.

3. THE DISCUSSION CENTERED ON THE NEW UNHCR BUDGET PRESENTATION AND THE FACT THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL SHIFT OF RESOURCES FROM SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO THE GENERAL BUDGET. THIS WAS A WELCOMED MOVE ON THE PART OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. THIS ADJUSTMENT WOULD LEAD TO A WIDER PARTICIPATION IN SUPPORTING REGULAR PROGRAMS, FACILITATE LONGER RANGE PLANNING, INCREASE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PROVIDE TIMELY INFORMATION TO GOVERNMENTS OF FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS EARLY IN THE YEAR. IT SHOULD ALSO SERVE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL APPEALS DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.

4. WITH REGARD TO FINANCING THE 1978 PROGRAM, THE GROUP WAS INFORMED BY THE NORWEGIAN EXCOMM CHAIRMAN THAT THE GENERAL PROGRAM WAS NOW FULLY FINANCED BUT THAT THERE WAS A CHORTFALL OF DOLLARS 12 MILLION TO FINANCE THE CAMP PROGRAM IN THAILAND.

5. THERE WAS ALSO A DISCUSSION OF THE CONCERN OF A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS THAT THE UNHCR WAS EXTENDING ITSELF BEYOND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS CAPACITY AND THAT THE BASIC MISSIONS OF THE PROVISION OF INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PROTECTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERMANENT REFUGEE SOLUTIONS WERE SUFFERING AS A RESULT. A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS BELIEVED THAT THERE SHOULD BE GREATER USE IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS CREATED TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES SUCH AS THE ICRC AND THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES PLUS OTHER PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS. OTHER REPRESENTATIVES CONSIDERED THAT PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT WAS THE BASIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE IMMIGRATION COUNTRIES SUPPORTED BY DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES WHERE NEEDED. THERE SHOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, BE GREATER USE OF UNDP AND BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

6. A NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES WERE ALSO CONCERNED THAT UNHCR WAS DEVOTING DISPROPORTIONATE RESOURCES TO ECONOMIC REFUGEES AND TO DISPLACED PERSONS. CANADA, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS WERE IN THE FOREGROUND ON THIS POINT.

7. AUSTRALIA, SUPPORTED BY THE U.S., INDICATED A STRONG DESIRE TO EMPHASIZE AT THE UPCOMING SESSION THE PLIGHT OF THE REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA AND HOPED FOR A LIVELY

DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT. THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION WILL ASK FOR SUPPORT FOR A STRONG AND BROAD RESOLUTION ON INDOCHINA MORE OR LESS ALONG THE LINES OF THE ONE THE U.S. DELEGATION SUBMITTED LAST YEAR. THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE PROVIDED THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON SHIP PROCEDURES FORWARDED FROM THE DEPARTMENT IN REFTEL. THE U.K. REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMED BRITISH AUTHORSHIP AND INDICATED THE RESOLUTION WAS INTENDED TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. MORE COORDINATION ON THIS HAS TO TAKE PLACE.

8. SOME REPRESENTATIVES URGED THAT THERE BE GREATER FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS WITH THE UNHCR IN THE FUTURE,

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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BONN FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN

INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A STANDING GROUP OF 6 MEMBER GOVERNMENTS. THE SUGGESTION WAS THAT THE SIX BE COMPOSED OF THREE MAJOR DONORS AND THREE MEMBERS WITH SUBSTANTIAL REFUGEE PROBLEMS. THE GENERAL FEELING WAS THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE INFORMAL CONTACT WITH UNHCR.

9. THE MATTER OF UNHCR'S ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AROSE. ABOUT FIFTY PERCENT OF THESE COSTS ARE UNDERWRITTEN FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. NORWAY TOOK THE LEAD IN PROMOTING THE IDEA THAT THE PRESENT ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF DOLS 15 MILLION IN VOLUNTARY FUNDS TO SUPPORT STAFF SHOULD BE SHIFTED TO THE REGULAR UN BUDGET. THIS ISSUE IS SOMEWHAT BEYOND THE COMPETENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE

COMMITTEE.

10. THE EXPANSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND IN ECOSOC, WAS ALSO DISCUSSED. SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES SPOKE OF THE NEED TO ELECT JAPAN AND AT LEAST ONE MORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPEC NATION. THE UK PROMOTED THE ELECTION OF THE SUDAN.

11. ON THE WHOLE THE MEETING OF THE FOURTEEN WAS A USEFUL INITIAL EXCHANGE ON A VARIETY OF MATTERS. CLEARLY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF NORWAY AND DENMARK ARE ADVOCATS OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER RIGHT DOWN THE LINE, AND PREFER THE STATUS QUO.

12. US MISSION HELD BILATERAL TALKS WITH CANADIANS ON SEPTEMBER 28 WHICH COVERED MOST OF THE SAME POINTS. CANADIANS HAVE REVIVED THEIR INTEREST IN UNHCR AND IN OTHER REFUGEE MATTERS. AS A MATTER OF INTEREST GOC NOW PLANS INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES OVER AND ABOVE PLANNED MONTHLY INTAKE OF 70 FAMILIES. CANADIANS WANT GREATER COORDINATION WITH THE US ON THESE MATTERS AND THIS WOULD ALSO BE IN OUR INTEREST. VANDEN HEUVEL

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